



# Oregon

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## Oregon Youth Authority

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### NEWS RELEASE

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## **At-risk boys graduate from Robert S. Farrell High School in Salem; OYA facilities award 155 diplomas, certificates in June**



*Relatives embrace graduates at Wednesday's ceremony at Robert S. Farrell High School at Hillcrest Youth Correctional Facility in Salem. In center photo, Karen Daniels, OYA assistant director for Facility Services, encourages graduates to continue learning.*

Wednesday, June 26 was graduation day at Robert S. Farrell High School at Hillcrest Youth Correctional Facility (YCF) in Salem. Fifteen at-risk boys received high school diplomas and one graduated from barbering school.

The ceremony in Salem, and one at the Oregon Youth Authority's (OYA) RiverBend facility in La Grande Thursday, capped a month-long series of graduations in which 155 college degrees, high school diplomas, GEDs, and vocational certificates were awarded to at-risk youth in 10 OYA facilities statewide.

RiverBend Youth Transition Facility (YTF) awarded 30 diplomas, GEDs and vocational certificates. RiverBend is also home to the first recipient of OYA's New Beginnings Scholarship. The \$1,000 scholarship, funded through voluntary donations, was awarded at Thursday's graduation ceremony to a young man who will use it to advance his online education at Portland State University.

Graduates took the microphone to praise teachers and parents. "I want to thank my family," one Farrell High School graduate told those gathered in the facility's gymnasium. "I know I caused you a lot of pain but I want to make you proud of me."

Karen Daniels, OYA's assistant director of Facility Services, addressed graduates in Salem and La Grande. "You have overcome so much adversity and difficulty to be where you are today," she said. "Your diploma, GED or certificate represents an opportunity to make a new, productive and law-abiding start in life after fulfilling your commitments here. As Oscar Wilde said: 'Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.'"

Daniels also encouraged graduates to continue learning through OYA programs such as Education Portal. The program offers free, online college courses that lead to widely accepted college credit. Oregon is the first state in the nation to offer such courses to juvenile offenders.

To improve their prospects after they complete their court-ordered commitments and return to society, all youth in OYA facilities must participate in education programs. OYA partners with the Oregon Department of Education and local school districts to offer classroom and vocational education opportunities.

The Hillcrest and RiverBend facilities are two of 10 youth correctional and transitional facilities managed statewide by OYA. Robert S. Farrell High School is operated at Hillcrest YCF by the Willamette Education Service District. RiverBend High School is operated by the InterMountain Education Service District.

For more on OYA's education services, [click here](#).

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The Oregon Youth Authority is the state's juvenile justice agency, reducing victimization by helping at-risk young people lead productive, crime-free lives. Learn more at [www.oregon.gov/oya](http://www.oregon.gov/oya) and follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/oregonyouth](https://www.twitter.com/oregonyouth)